

RTF 479

Word/Screen/Motion

Tu 1-3 Fisk 115

Th 1-3 Louis 119

Chuck Kleinhans

office: 209 AMS, 491-2255

office hours, M 3-5 and by appointment

chuckkle@northwestern.edu

Enrollment 12. Open to PhD and MFA students.

What does it mean to have words in motion on a screen? What is the theory and practice of such an event? What are the aesthetics of this increasingly common part of our media world?

We will consider text on screen, ranging from 20C avant garde typographic based art and concrete poetry to video poetry, from scrolling and multiple layers of text in advertising to aesthetics of the Graphic User Interface, from Burrough's cut-up technique to hypertext, the aesthetics of text messaging and alternatives to the stunted imagination of PowerPoint. Students will do three different short projects, using whatever medium and technology they are already skilled at: e.g., Flash animation, or video/film, iMovie, flip book animation, or whatever. The first week of each unit considers examples, theory and history; the second week involves further discussion and pitching projects; the third week screens and critiques student projects. A final project can be developed either as a primarily critical work or primarily creative work.

Cross listed with Center for Art and Technology, Open to MFAs (including art theory/practice), and also PhDs in RTF and Comp Lit, MTS, etc.

Th Mar 31

No class--see CMS for assignments

Tu April 5 (Fisk)

Course Intro

Big Questions

Basic Info on projects

Screening and discussion: motion graphics sites

Thinking about fonts, 1

The TV screen sampler

Bloomberg Information TV

CNN Headline News

Court TV

The Weather Channel

Intro to concrete poetry (handout)

Th April 7 (Louis)

Introductory survey screening

Takahiko Iimura, *White Calligraphy* (1967, 16mm, b&w/si, 15 min) [Canyon]

Bruce Baillie, *Castro Street* (16mm film shown as video) ck pers copy

Su Friedrich, *Gently Down the Stream* (16mm film, 1981, b&w/si, 14 min)
[Canyon]
Simon Tarr, *Crescent Time*, (16mm, 2000, color/sou, 4 min.) [Canyon]
Peter Rose, *Secondary Currents* 1982, 16mm, b&w/so, 18m [Canyon]

Titles sampler (from RTF media library)

Psycho
Vertigo
Dr Strangelove
Se7en
Trainspotting

Tu April 12 (Fisk)

Discussion of fonts (readings on Helvetica, Template Gothic)

Students pitch project one

Further examination of sites, CDs, DVDs

1. Discussion of fonts (handout readings on Helvetica, Template Gothic)

Be prepared to discuss these two articles on fonts:

What do fonts signify?

How do they signify?

In choosing fonts, what considerations does a designer (you) make?

2. Students pitch Project One

Make a piece which prominently uses type and/or words as a graphic expressive element. That is rather than words appearing to then make the viewer think about the word's meaning, the words appear primarily as physical presences.

You should succinctly present your idea for the project including what it is, what your intention for it involves, how you will execute the idea (including a time estimate), and what things might change as you get involved with it. If you have a mock up or model, that's fine, but not necessary.

Your presentation of the pitch should be organized and professional, as if you were presenting it to someone who is or would be paying you and/or a group of peers who want to help you accomplish the project.

Everyone is expected to contribute to discussing the projects. Good feedback helps the person clarify what they are doing, think of alternatives, and efficiencies.

3. Presentation of interesting sites you've found

Do a web search using terms such as "motion graphics," "video poetry," "type in motion," "words on screen," etc. and come up with three sites you would like to show in class next Tuesday in the Fisk Lab.

In addition, make a list of all interesting sites that you come across to share with the rest of the class.

Post this BEFORE class on Blackboard (CMS)

Th April 14 (Louis)

Screening and discussion

Rick Hancox, *Waterworx (A Clear Day and No Memories)* 1982, 16mm, color/so, 6 min [Canyon]

Hancox, *Landfall* (1983, 16mm, color/so, 11 min.) [Canyon]

Hancox, *Beach Events* (1984, 16mm, color/so, 8.5 min) [Canyon]

Michael Snow, *So Is This*, 1982, 16mm, b&w/si, 45m, [Canyon]

Tu April 19 (Fisk)

SHOW PROJECTS

Discussion--Tufte, *The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint*

Samples of PowerPoint and Keynote presentations

Th April 21 (Louis)

Hollis Frampton, *Poetic Justice* (1972 16mm b&w/si, 31 min). [NYFMC]

David Gatten, *Hardwood Process* (1966, 16mm, color/si, 14 min.) [Canyon]

Helen Mirra Shlafbau, (video, 14.30 min 1995) [VDB]

Tu April 26 (Fisk)

Pitch Project 2

TBA

Th April 28 (Louis)

Janis Crystal Lipson, *Visible Inventory Six: Motel Dissolve* (1978, 16mm, color/so, 15 min) [Canyon]

Mona Hatoum, *Measures of Distance*, (video, 1988, 15 min color) [Women Make Movies]

Su Friedrich, *Sink or Swim* (1990, 16mm, b&w/so, 48 min) RTF shown as video

Tu May 3 (Fisk)

TBA

Th May 5 (Louis)

Hollis Frampton, *Zorns Lemma* (1970 16mm co/so, 60 min) NYFMC

Jon Lindell, *Put Your Lips around Yes* (Video, b&w, sound, 1991, 5 min. (VDB)

Antonio Muntadas, *Slogans* (video, 9 min, 1991) (VDB)

Tony Cokes, *Ad Vice* (video, 1999, 6.36 min) [VDB]

Rebecca Bollinger, *Alphabetically Sorted* (video, 5.18, 1994) [VDB]

Les LeVeque, *A song From the Cultural Revolution* (video, 5 min, 1998) [VDB]

Tu May 10 (Fisk)

SHOW PROJECT 2

new forms; pitch project

Th May 12 (Louis)

Paul Glabicki, *Under the Sea* (16mm, color/sound, 22 m 1989) [Canyon]

Tu May 17 (Fisk)

Student generated project: TBA

Joyce Weiland, *Pierre Vallieres* (1972, 16mm, 30 min, so, co) [CFMDC]
Morgan Fisher, *Standard Gauge* (16mm, 1984, 35 min) [NYFC]

Show project 3

Godard Sampler

TBA

Peter Greenaway, *Prospero's Books* [RTF]

SHOW AND TELL FINAL PROJECTS/PAPERS

All projects should be relatively full-bodied but modest and thrifty. That is, conception, creativity and imagination are the key points. Execution should be within your already established technical competence. In other words, don't try to learn a new technology or software for this course. Put your effort into doing something imaginative. Don't take this as an excuse to be sloppy or careless. Your presentation should be professional, just as if you were presenting to a client or jury. All creative work must be accompanied by a written discussion of it, which can also be modest and thrifty.

Make a piece which prominently uses type and/or words as a graphic expressive element. That is rather than words appearing to then make the viewer think about the word's meaning, the words appear primarily as physical presences. (We will see some examples.)

Make a narrative piece using words on screen as the primary vehicle for telling the story.

Devise a piece that uses words on a screen to communicate something that is significant to you--personally, socially, politically, etc., using an aesthetically experimental form. You can use any format you can find and afford: text messaging, Jumbotron, website, computer, DVD, CD, film, video, etc.

You can elaborate one of the earlier projects, make something completely new, or write a paper.

[illegible]

There is only one assigned text for the class, and I did not place an order with the Norris Center Store. I suggest you use Amazon.com or another online book seller.

The book (actually more of a booklet) is Edward R. Tufte, *The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint* which is \$7.00 new on Amazon. This might seem a little spendy but it is excellently produced in color and well worth the cover price. Tufte is a brilliant thinker and innovator in the field of information graphics and design presentation, so you might look at his other books too.

3. Some additional books will be on reserve for the course, and there will a number of handouts of key articles.

If you want to flesh out your Amazon (or other) order, you might consider *Subtitles: On the Foreignness of Film*, ed. Atom Egoyan and Ian Balfour (\$23.10) which I'll also have on reserve, or you might enter "motion graphics" on Amazon's search and see what pops up (some samplers and some tech instruction manuals). Again, none of these are required texts.

I may have to schedule some of the screening choices (on Thursdays) a little differently depending on when things arrive and distributor's logjams. Also, I've kept some open spaces (TBA) so we can add things that seem to develop along with the course and your interests and suggestions.

Books on Reserve

1. This book has the script of Frampton's *Poetic Justice*, as well as his challenging *Zorns Lemma* which we'll see later in the course. And Su Friedrich's work.

Screen writings : scripts and texts by independent filmmakers / [edited] by Scott MacDonald. Berkeley : University of California Press, c1995.

Selective contents:

Yoko Ono -- William Greaves -- Hollis Frampton -- Laura Mulvey -- Peter Wollen -- James Benning -- Michael Snow -- Peter Rose -- Morgan Fisher -- Trinh T. Minh-ha -- Su Friedrich -- Ann Marie Fleming -- Yvonne Rainer.

2. This book is excellent for an into and overview
Thinking with type : a critical guide for designers, writers & editors / Ellen Lupton. New York : Princeton Architectural Press, c2004.

3. *A collection of outstanding writings on design*
Design, writing, research : writing on graphic design / Ellen Lupton, J. Abbott Miller. New York : Kiosk, 1996.

4. *Tufte's crucial work*
Envisioning information / Edward R. Tufte. Cheshire, Conn. : Graphics Press, 1990.

5. *More Tufte*
The visual display of quantitative information / Edward R. Tufte.

Cheshire, Conn: Graphics Press, 2001.

Contents:

Graphical practice -- Graphical excellence -- Graphical integrity -- Sources of graphical integrity and sophistication -- Theory of data graphics -- Data-ink and graphical redesign -- Chartjunk: vibrations, grids, and ducks -- Data-ink maximization and graphical design -- Multifunctioning graphical elements -- Data density and small multiples -- Aesthetics and technique in data graphical design -- Epilogue: Designs for the display of information.

6. Thoughtful essays on type

Texts on type : critical writings on typography / edited by Steven Heller and Philip B. Meggs. New York : Allworth Press, 2001.

Contents:

Foreword / Steven Heller -- Introduction / Philip B. Meggs -- 1. Aesthetics: On Form and Expression. Found Poetry: The Dude Typographers / Alastair Johnston. Old and New Fashions in Typography / Talbot Baines Reed. Art in Type Design / Frederic W. Goudy. The Modern Type Family / Charles Brodie. An Existential Guide to Type / Karrie Jacobs -- 2. Criticism: Type as Discourse. A Plea for Authentic Type Design / Hermann Zapf. The Obscene Typography Machine / Philip B. Meggs. Type Is Dead: Long Live Type / Matthew Butterick. Designing Hate / Steven Heller. A Post-Mortem on Deconstruction? / Ellen Lupton. Rumors of the Death of Typography Have Been Greatly Exaggerated / Peter Fraterdeus. American Gothic / Rick Poyner -- 3. Anatomy: Understanding Typefaces. Adobe Garamond / Jerry Kelly. Modern Style with a Human Face / John D. Berry.

SITES

<http://www.fiftiesweb.com/burma.htm>
<http://artengine.ca/chungyan/imprint/>
<http://www.creamyorange.com/#>
<http://www.transom.org/video/shows/2004/vidlit/craziest2.swf>
<http://www.hypereye.tv/SAMPLES.htm>
<http://wings.buffalo.edu/epc/>
<http://www.poemsthatgo.com/>
<http://dbqp.blogspot.com/2005/02/words-in-motion.html>
<http://dbqp.blogspot.com/>
<http://www.id.iit.edu/visiblelanguage/Directory.html>

479 Word/Screen/Motion

What is a word?

What is a text?

What is typography?

What is language?

What is spoken language?

What is printed language?

What happens when words appear on a screen?

What happens when words appear on a screen and can move?

What is the time and space of a screen?
What is a screen?
What is motion?

e-reserve (april 7)

Scott MacDonald, "Text As Image" special supplement to *Afterimage* (Rochester NY) vol 13 no 8 (March 1986) pp 9-20.